



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 252-6933

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Man Sentenced to Six Months in Prison For Defrauding The Government To Collect Pension of His Deceased Father - More Than \$130,000 Collected Through Scheme -

WASHINGTON - Thomas F. Desanto, 58, of Herndon, Virginia, was sentenced today to six months of incarceration for defrauding the United States government in order to collect the pension of his deceased father, announced U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Patrick E. McFarland, Inspector General of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Desanto pled guilty in April 2011 to one count of theft of government money and was sentenced by the Honorable Robert L. Wilkins of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Following completion of his prison term, he will be placed on three years of supervised release, including 180 days that must be spent in home confinement.

As part of the plea agreement, Desanto agreed to pay full restitution of \$134,639 to the government and also agreed to an order of forfeiture.

According to a statement of offense agreed to by the government and Desanto, the defendant's father received retirement annuity payments as a former federal employee until his death in April 1991. After his father died, Desanto took steps to defraud OPM so that he could collect the pension – a pension to which he was not entitled. As part of the scheme, on three occasions, Desanto took part in forging his father's signature on Address Verification Letters falsely certifying that his father was still alive. He then mailed the letters to OPM.

Based on these certifications, OPM continued to pay the annuity, which the defendant collected. In order to conceal his participation in the scheme, Desanto acquired a fraudulent Pennsylvania driver's license in a fake name that bore his photograph. Desanto used this driver's license to open a joint bank account in the name of his deceased father and the fake name on the driver's license, and directed the annuity payments to this account.

From May 1991 to April 2006, the defendant collected a total of \$134,639 in annuity payments to which he was not entitled. In April 2006, OPM discovered the death of Desanto's father by examining records of the Social Security Administration, and OPM halted the annuity payments.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen and Inspector General McFarland commended the investigative efforts of Special Agent Nunzio Orlando of the Office of the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management. They also praised the work of members of the United States Attorney's Office, including Paralegal Specialist Mary Treanor, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Bryan Seeley, who prosecuted the case.

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